

APPENDIX A-2. USUAL DOSAGES FOR ASTHMA MEDICATIONS

Figure 4. Dosages of Drugs for Asthma Exacerbations in Emergency Medical Care or Hospital (Updates EPR-2 Figure 3–10)

Medication	Dosages		
	Adult Dose	Child Dose*	Comments
Short-Acting Inhaled Beta₂-Agonists			
Albuterol			
Nebulizer solution (5.0 mg/mL, 2.5 mg/3 mL, 1.25 mg/3 mL, 0.63 mg/3 mL)	2.5–5 mg every 20 minutes for 3 doses, then 2.5–10 mg every 1–4 hours as needed, or 10–15 mg/hour continuously	0.15 mg/kg (minimum dose 2.5 mg) every 20 minutes for 3 doses, then 0.15–0.3 mg/kg up to 10 mg every 1–4 hours as needed, or 0.5 mg/kg/hour by continuous nebulization	Only selective beta ₂ -agonists are recommended. For optimal delivery, dilute aerosols to minimum of 3 mL at gas flow of 6–8 L/min.
MDI (90 mcg/puff)	4–8 puffs every 20 minutes up to 4 hours, then every 1–4 hours as needed	4–8 puffs every 20 minutes for 3 doses, then every 1–4 hours inhalation maneuver. Use spacer/holding chamber	As effective as nebulized therapy if patient is able to coordinate.
Bitolterol			
Nebulizer solution (2 mg/mL)	See albuterol dose	See albuterol dose; thought to be half as potent as albuterol on a mg basis	Has not been studied in severe asthma exacerbations. Do not mix with other drugs.
MDI (370 mcg/puff)	See albuterol dose	See albuterol dose	Has not been studied in severe asthma exacerbations.
Levalbuterol (R-albuterol)			
Nebulizer solution (0.63 mg/3 mL, 1.25 mg/3 mL)	1.25–2.5 mg every 20 minutes for 3 doses, then 1.25–5 mg every 1–4 hours as needed, or 5–7.5 mg/hour continuously	0.075 mg/kg (minimum dose 1.25 mg) every 20 minutes for 3 doses, then 0.075–0.15 mg/kg up to 5 mg every 1–4 hours as needed, or 0.25 mg/kg/hour by continuous nebulization	0.63 mg of levalbuterol is equivalent to 1.25 mg of racemic albuterol for both efficacy and side effects.
Pirbuterol			
MDI (200 mcg/puff)	See albuterol dose	See albuterol dose; thought to be half as potent as albuterol on a mg basis	Has not been studied in severe asthma exacerbations.
Systemic (Injected) Beta₂-Agonists			
Epinephrine 1:1000 (1 mg/mL)	0.3–0.5 mg every 20 minutes for 3 doses sq	0.01 mg/kg up to 0.3–0.5 mg every 20 minutes for 3 doses sq	No proven advantage of systemic therapy over aerosol.
Terbutaline (1 mg/mL)	0.25 mg every 20 minutes for 3 doses sq	0.01 mg/kg every 20 minutes for 3 doses then every 2–6 hours as needed sq	No proven advantage of systemic therapy over aerosol.